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Black Bass Action Committee / Bass Classics of Santa Clara / California Fly Fishers Unlimited
California Sportfishing Protection Alliance / California Striped Bass Association
Chico Flyfishers / Coastside Fishing Club / Delta Fly Fishers / Diablo Valley Fly Fishermen
E.C. Powell Fly Fishers / Fly Fishers for Conservation / Fly Fishers of Davis / Friends of Butte Creek
Granite Bay Flycasters / Gold Country Fly Fishers / Grizzly Peak Flyfishers
Golden Gate Angling & Casting Club / Goldenwest Women Flyfishers / Mission Peak Fly Anglers
NCC - Federation of Fly Fishers / NORCAL Kayak Anglers / Palo Alto Flyfishers Pasadena Casting Club
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Association / Peninsula Fly Fishers
Recreational Fishing Alliance / San Jose Flycasters / Santa Cruz Fly Fisherman / Shasta Fly Fishers
SWC - Federation of Fly Fishers / Tracy Fly Fishers / Tri-Valley Fly Fishers / United Anglers of Calif.
United Pier & Shore Anglers of Calif. / USA Fishing / Wilderness Fly Fishers

7.17.2014

Sonke Mastrup, Executive Director
California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Dear Sonki:

Enclosed you will find the "Agenda Package" we provided to representatives of the CDF&W during our meeting of 3.27.14. This document is intended to serve as background information for our upcoming meeting with you.

The section of the agenda we would like to review with you can be found in bullet #3 "AFG's request for the Department to evaluate our recommendation to implement our proposed "Striped Bass Recovery and Maintenance Program". We requested that we work together to begin to stabilize the fishery at its' current estimated population level and, to the extent possible, begin to recovery the fishery as intended by the Commission's Striped Bass Policy. We did not request to restore the fishery due to our concern, and that of the Commission, to ensure listed species and species of special concern are not impacted.

During a follow meeting with Stafford Lehr on this topic, we were advised that the Department would not work with us toward these goals as they believe they are in compliance with the Commission's Striped Bass Policy and those sections of the Fish & Game Code that require the public's fishery resources be properly managed. You will also find a copy of the follow up letter we sent the Director expressing our concern for the department's decision.

I'll be on vacation until the 28 of the month. Looking forward to discussing this with you!



John Beuttler

1360 Neilson Street
Berkeley, CA 94702-1116

**AFS – CD FW Agenda, Thursday 3.27.14
Yolo Wildlife Area Headquarters**

- Status of the BDCP and the opposition expressed by the Salmon and Steelhead Advisory Committee to the CDFW;
- Outcome of the “State of the Science Predation Workshop;
- AFG’s request for the Department to evaluate our recommendation to implement the “Striped Bass Recovery and Maintenance Program”;
- Status of the SWRCB’s activities to establishing new flow criteria for the estuary’s Water Quality Control Plan;
- Status of the economic report funded by the Striped Bass and Bay-Delta Stamp Committees to quantify the economic contribution generated by the anadromous fisheries of the Central Valley & Bay-Delta estuary including the impact to the state’s economy due to the decline of these fisheries.

Allied Fishing Groups

6597 Cane Lane / Valley Springs / CA 95252 / 209.772.9398

Black Bass Action Committee / Bass Classics of Santa Clara / California Fly Fishers Unlimited
California Sportfishing Protection Alliance / California Trout / California Striped Bass Association
Chico Flyfishers / Coastside Fishing Club / Delta Fly Fishers / Diablo Valley Fly Fishermen
E.C. Powell Fly Fishers / Fly Fishers for Conservation / Fly Fishers of Davis / Friends of Butte Creek
Granite Bay Flycasters / Gold Country Fly Fishers / Grizzly Peak Flyfishers
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Program for the Recovery and Maintenance of the Striped Bass Fishery in the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary

The Striped Bass fishery has declined from an estimated 3 million adult fish in the early 1960's to some 350,000 adults as of 2013. The fishery has not been managed to maintain the population level permitted under the Section 10 Permit issued by the National Marine Fishery Service in 2000 of 1,250,000 adult fish. It has also not been managed to realize the objectives of the California Fish and Game Commission's policy on the management of the Striped Bass fishery adopted in 1996. Due to the drought and the massive amount of water exported out of the Delta by the State and Federal water projects, the decline will become worse unless it is addressed while there are enough fish to enable it to recover!

Given the findings of the "State of the Science Workshop on Fish Predation on Central Valley Salmonids" and a number of Fish and Game Code sections that require all of the public's fishery resources to be managed, it is incumbent on the CDFW to implement the California Fish and Game Commission's policy on the management of the Striped Bass fishery. The Fish and Game Commission Policy makes this mandatory.

"It is the policy of the Fish and Game Commission that:

1. The Department of Fish and Game shall work toward stabilizing and then restoring the presently declining striped bass fishery of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Estuary. This goal is consistent with

Commission policy that the Department shall emphasize programs that ensure, enhance, and prevent loss of sport fishing opportunities.

II. The Department shall ensure that actions to increase striped bass abundance are consistent with the Department's long-term mission and public trust responsibilities including those related to threatened and endangered species and other species of special concern. Recognizing issues associated with potential incidental take of these species, an appropriate interim objective is to restore the striped bass population to the 1980 population level of 1.1 million adults within the next 5-10 years.

III. The long-term striped bass restoration goal, as identified in the Department's 1989 Striped Bass Restoration Plan, is 3 million adults.

IV. The Department shall work toward these goals through any appropriate means. Such means may include actions to help maintain, restore, and improve habitat; pen-rearing of fish salvaged from water project fish screens; and artificial propagation."

We are proposing the Department establish a "Striped Bass Recovery and Maintenance Program" to implement the Commission's policy. This Program includes the management of the fishery through the use of the three critical components listed below. These actions should be used in an integrated manner to realize recovering the fishery at a population of 1,250,000 until such time as endangered salmonids have demonstrated sufficient recovery to permit further increases in populations of Striped Bass to realize the long term goal of 3 million adult fish.

- CDFW's renewal of the Section 10 Permit that has expired to allow the Department to manage the fishery in compliance with the Federal Endangered Species Act;
- The re-establishment of the Striped Bass Pen Rearing Project that raised very young striped bass salvaged from the State Water Project's Pumping Plant in the Delta and transferred them into floating net pens. When these fish reached yearling size they

were released into the estuary. The Project helped to stabilize the striped bass population at an estimated 1,250,000 adults prior to its the termination; and,

- The modification of the Sport Fishing Regulations by the Fish and Game Commission to significantly reduce the harvest of Striped Bass to assist in the fishery's recovery.

Potential Striped Bass Fishing Regulation Options to Help Recover the Fishery

We have developed potential changes to the current striped bass fishing regulations to reduce the harvest on critical components of the fishery until it recovers. Considering the adversity facing the fishery due to water project operations, lack of management and contaminants, without these or similar regulation changes, this once premier fishery of the Bay-Delta estuary may be lost as a viable sport fishery and a valuable public resource.

The options below to modify the current regulations will require analysis and evaluation by CDFW to determine those that could be used to help recover the striped bass fishery to a sustainable level of abundance. Other options that CDFW believes could be of assistance in realizing the recovery and maintenance of the fishery should be evaluated as well. Once this evaluation is completed, we would like to work with the department to develop a regulation proposal. We then envision coordinating with the Department and the Commission to establish such regulations. Should the Commission approve them, it will then be essential to utilize these regulations in conjunction with the other elements of the "Recovery and Maintenance Program" we are proposing for implementation.

The following potential regulatory options are intended to apply only to the Bay-Delta Estuary, its tributary waters, and the Ocean, should any of them be found necessary to assist the recovery of the fishery.

1. Options for the Periodic Closure of Fishery:

- *Close all fishing April 15 through May 31 up stream of the Benicia Bridge on Hwy 680 to increase spawning and reproductive success.*
- *Partial closure of the fishery during April 15 through May 31 when only male fish may be harvested under a two male fish daily limit in all rivers tributary to the Bay-Delta estuary.*
- *Closing all fishing in May, July and October annually.*

2. Slot Limit Options (take permitted only in the slot):

- *A Slot Limit of 18 to 25 inches. All females that reach a size 25 inches and larger would be protected to enhance reproductive potential of the fishery.*
- *A Slot Limit of 18 to 28 inches. All females that reach a size 28 inches and larger would be protected to enhance reproductive potential of the fishery.*
- *A Slot Limit of 30 to 40 inches to protect the reproductive potential of the more fecund spawning females while providing an opportunity for harvest of "trophy size fish".*

3. Establish a "catch and release fishery". *All fish would be protected from harvest and a single barbless hook would be required for bait fishing.*



Press Release

6 January 2014
For Immediate Release

Contact: Bill Jennings, California Sportfishing Protection Alliance: 209-464-5067; cell 938-9053; email, deltakeep@me.com; website, www.calsport.org

Delta Fish Hammered Yet Again *Fall Midwater Trawl Results Reveal Continued Biological Collapse*

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) has released the results of the 2013 Fall Midwater Trawl (FMWT), which reconfirms the continuing biological collapse that is occurring in the Sacramento – San Joaquin Delta Estuary. The FMWT conducts monthly surveys from September through December at 100 index stations in the Delta. The results reveal that populations of Delta smelt, striped bass and American shad declined from the disastrous levels of last year while longfin smelt and threadfin shad showed little improvement from last year's lows. The surveys, which were initiated in 1967, the same year the State Water Project began exporting water from the Delta, show that population indices of Delta smelt, striped bass, longfin smelt, threadfin shad and American shad have declined 95.6%, 99.6%, 99.8%, 97.8%, 90.9%, respectively, between 1967 and 2013. Inexplicably, the 2013 indices for splittail were not released but results from 2012 reveal that splittail indices have dropped 98.5% from 1967 levels.

"Excessive water diversions from the Delta by the State and Federal Projects and the failure of state agencies to enforce water quality standards have created an extended fish drought that can only be characterized as a biological holocaust," said CSPA Executive Director Bill Jennings. "And the same agencies that orchestrated and chaperoned this biological meltdown are not only proposing a scheme to divert massive quantities of fresh water flows via tunnels under the Delta, under the guise of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP), but they ask us to trust them to build the tunnels now and figure out how to operate them later," he said.

BDCP proponents suggest that the two 35-mile tunnels under the Delta will not lead to an increase in total Delta exports. However, actual operations will be determined after completion of the project through a decision-tree adaptive management process by the same agencies that have historically failed to protect the estuary. Examination of the four alternative decision tree operational scenarios in the BDCP EIR/EIS reveals that all of them decrease Delta outflow and three of them substantially increase exports. BDCP modeling conducted for the State Water Resources Control Board demonstrates that BDCP could only export about 3.1 MAF of water if reasonable fishery protection measures are included (increased outflow, bypass flow, coldwater pool management, etc.).

"BDCP proponents are not going to spend some \$67 billion to receive the same or less water and reduced outflow for an estuary already hemorrhaging from a lack of water is a death sentence," Jennings said adding, "given the agencies abysmal track record, there can be no trust and no tunnels until Jerry Brown takes affirmative steps to end his fish drought."

The 2013 FMWT indices for Delta smelt and American shad were the second lowest in the 46 years of the survey. The striped bass index was tied for third lowest, while the longfin smelt and threadfin shad indices were the eighth and fifth lowest, respectively. The vast majority of record low indices have occurred over the last decade. For example: comparing the average indices of the first six years of the survey (1967-72) with the average of the most recent six years shows that the six-year average indices of Delta smelt, striped bass, longfin smelt, threadfin shad, American shad and splittail have declined by 91.7%, 98.6%, 99.3%, 99.9%, 69.6% and 88.7%, respectively.

Excessive water exports by the state and federal export projects in 2013 led to degraded water quality and habitat conditions in the Delta. The projects exported some 826,778 acre-feet more water than they had projected they would be able to deliver. Consequently, water quality standards were violated in the South Delta in June and July through 15 August and at Emmaton in April, May and June and at Jersey Point in June. Emmaton and Jersey Point are in the western Delta. Sharply increased exports coupled with a sudden reduction in Delta outflow in late June and early July caused the low salinity zone and pelagic species like Delta smelt to be drawn into the western Delta where they encountered lethal temperature conditions created by a combination of warm water released from reservoirs and high ambient temperatures. Another likely factor was high exports leading to excessive Old and Middle River reverse flows during the critical 15-April - 15 May San Joaquin pulse flow period.

2013 was also a bad year for salmon. As many as half of this year's up-migrating winter-run salmon were stranded in the Yolo Bypass and Colusa Basin in April-June and Sacramento River temperature requirements to protect spawning winter-run were relaxed in June. In November, abrupt reductions in Sacramento River flow exposed spawning redds, killed up to 40% of Sacramento River fall-run salmon eggs and stranded newly emerged fry. And low reservoir levels will likely lead to inadequate flows for young salmon out-migration this coming spring. The decline of Central Valley salmon populations over the last 46 years is similar to the declines of Delta pelagic species. But the full consequences of this year's debacle will only become fully apparent when this year's young salmon return to spawn in three years.

Further information, including DFW's FMWT Memo with graphs, the BDCP alternative comparison and the State Board's quantitative comparisons can be found at: www.calsport.org.

The California Sportfishing Protection Alliance (CSPA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit public benefit conservation and research organization established in 1983 for the purpose of conserving, restoring, and enhancing the state's water quality, wildlife and fishery resources and their aquatic ecosystems and associated riparian habitats.

Memorandum

Date: January 2, 2014

To: Scott Wilson
Regional Manager, Region 3
California Dept of Fish and Wildlife

From: Dave Contreras
Environmental Scientist
California Dept of Fish and Wildlife

Subject: Fall Midwater Trawl 2013 Annual Fish Abundance Summary

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has conducted the Fall Midwater Trawl Survey (FMWT) to index the fall abundance of pelagic fishes nearly annually since 1967. FMWT equipment and methods have remained consistent since the survey's inception to allow abundance indices to be compared across time.

The FMWT conducts monthly surveys from September through December. The annual abundance index is the sum of the September through December monthly survey indices. During each monthly survey, one oblique midwater trawl tow is conducted at each of 100 index stations used for index calculation and at an additional 22 non-index stations that provide enhanced distribution information (Figure 1).

The 2013 sampling season was successfully completed on December 17, 2013. Field crews successfully conducted trawl tows at all index stations during all four survey months. Logistical difficulties precluded sampling at a single non-index station each in the Napa River during September and in the upper Sacramento River during November; all other non-index stations were successfully sampled. The following summary contains 2013 annual abundance information for five fish species based on FMWT survey sampling and describes the 2013 fall distributions of these fishes.

Delta Smelt

The 2013 Delta Smelt index is 18, making it the second lowest index in FMWT history (Figure 2). Delta Smelt abundance was highest in 1970 and has been consistently low since 2003, except in 2011.

Through the fall, Delta Smelt (n=18) were collected at index stations from Grizzly Bay through the lower Sacramento River. In September, they were collected in Honker Bay (n=2), the confluence (n=1), and the lower Sacramento River (n=1). In October, they were found in the confluence (n=2) and lower Sacramento River

(n=1) and by November, they were found at the confluence (n=2). In December, they were collected from Grizzly Bay (n=1), Montezuma Slough (n=1), Honker Bay (n=3), the confluence (n=3), and the lower Sacramento River (n=1). During the four surveys, only two Delta Smelt were caught at non-index stations. Both were caught in the Sacramento River Deep Water Shipping Channel (SRDWSC) in November.

Age-0 Striped Bass

The 2013 age-0 Striped Bass index is 70 and tied for the third lowest index in FMWT history (Figure 3). Age-0 Striped Bass abundance was highest at the survey's inception in 1967.

Age-0 Striped Bass (n=55) were collected at index stations from San Pablo Bay through the lower Sacramento River. Distribution varied month to month and over half of age-0 Striped Bass catch in 2013 occurred in December. One age-0 Striped Bass was collected at a non-index station in Cache Slough in October.

Longfin Smelt

The 2013 Longfin Smelt index is 164 and the eighth lowest index in FMWT history (Figure 4). Longfin Smelt abundance was highest in 1967.

Longfin Smelt (n=87) were collected at index stations from San Pablo Bay through the lower Sacramento River. Similar to last year, 60% percent of the total catch occurred in December. One Longfin Smelt was collected at a non-index station in the SRDWSC in November.

Threadfin Shad

The 2013 Threadfin Shad index is 277, the fifth lowest in FMWT history, and the sixth in a series of very low abundance indices (Figure 5). Threadfin Shad abundance was highest in 1997.

Threadfin Shad (n=208) were collected at index stations from San Pablo Bay through the lower Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers and the South Delta. From September through November, they were mostly (76%) found in freshwater areas (lower Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers). In December, the number caught increased and distribution expanded with more fish captured in Suisun and San Pablo bays. Threadfin Shad were also collected at non-index stations in the Napa River (n=1), Cache Slough (n=761), SRDWSC (n=676), the upper Sacramento River (n=3), and the Mokelumne River (n=1).

American Shad

The 2013 American Shad index is 309 and the second lowest in FMWT history (Figure 6). American Shad abundance was highest in 2003.

American Shad (n=231) distribution varied from September to December but 79% of the total index catch were found at stations from Suisun Bay through the lower Sacramento River. American Shad were also collected at non-index stations in the Napa River (n=1), Cache Slough (n=46), SRDWSC (n=131), Steamboat Slough (n=2), and Mokelumne River (n=3).

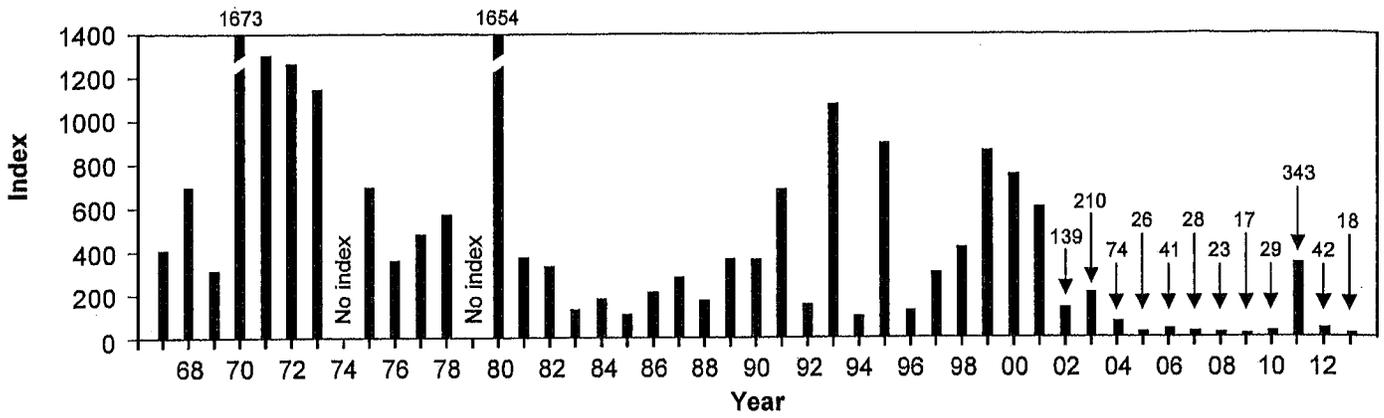


Figure 2. Delta Smelt FMWT annual abundance indices, 1967-2013.

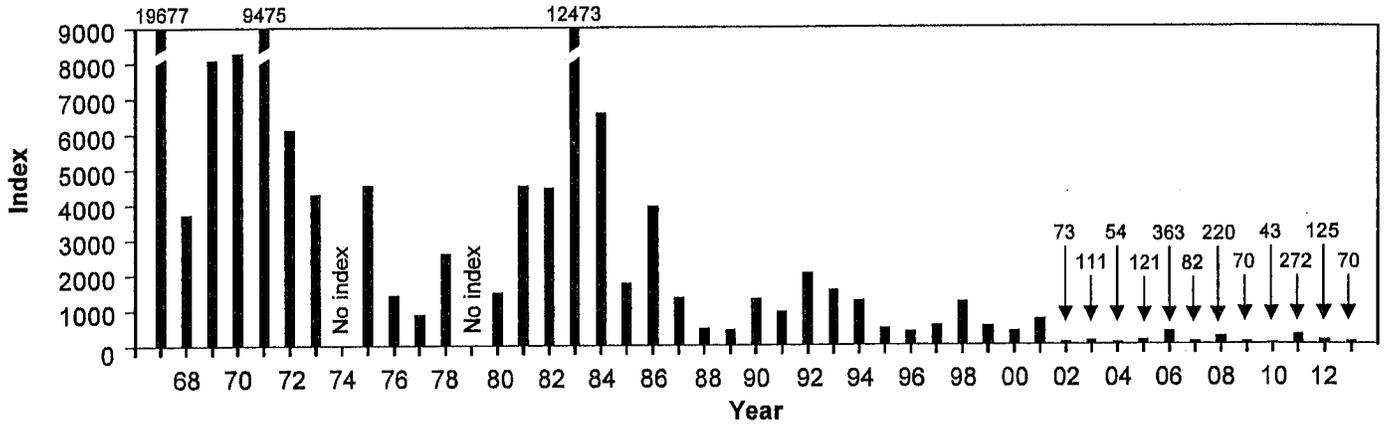


Figure 3. Age-0 Striped Bass FMWT annual abundance indices, 1967-2013.

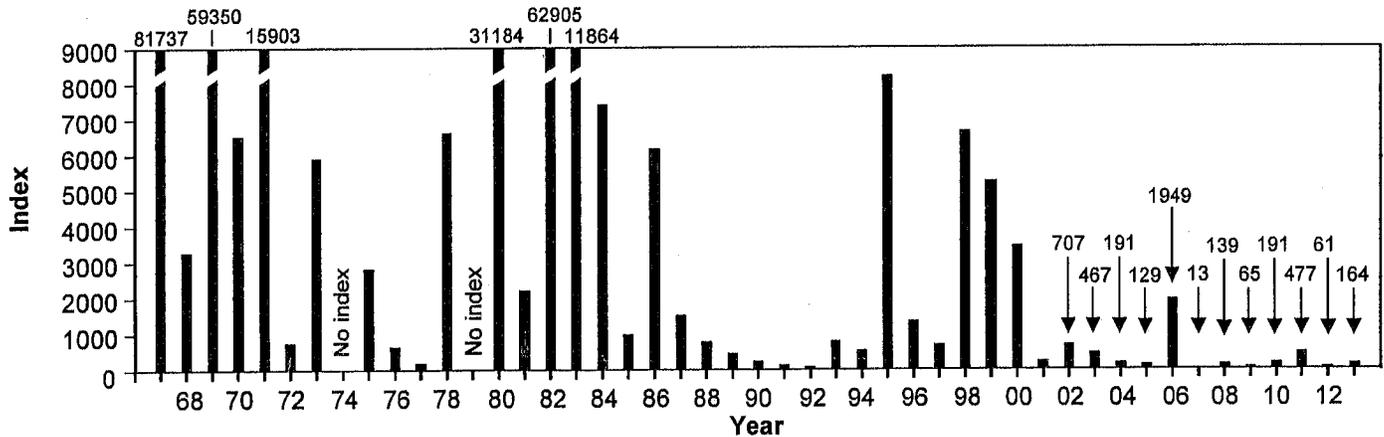


Figure 4. Longfin Smelt FMWT annual abundance indices, 1967-2013.

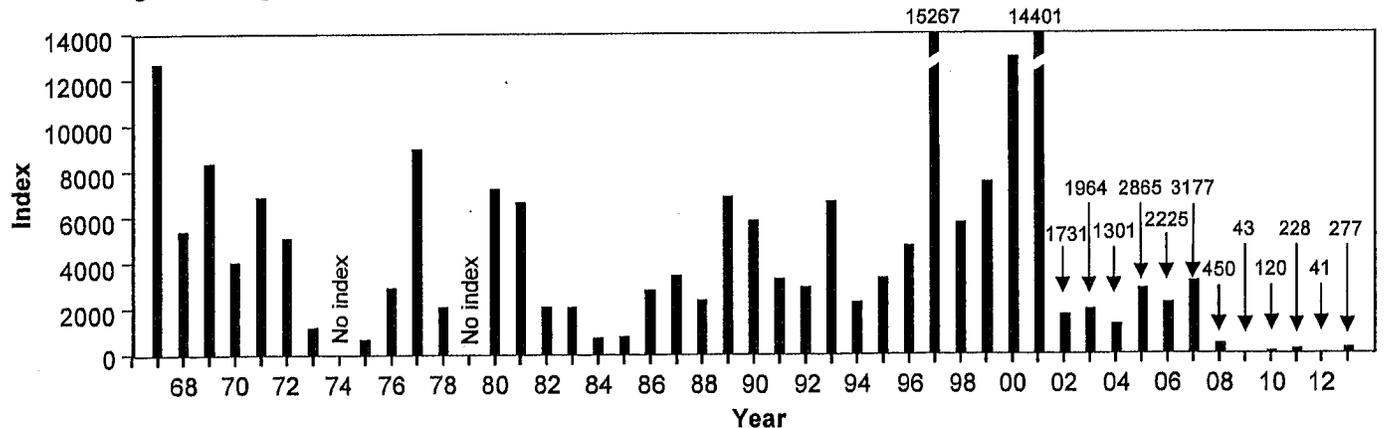


Figure 5. Threadfin Shad FMWT annual abundance indices, 1967-2013.

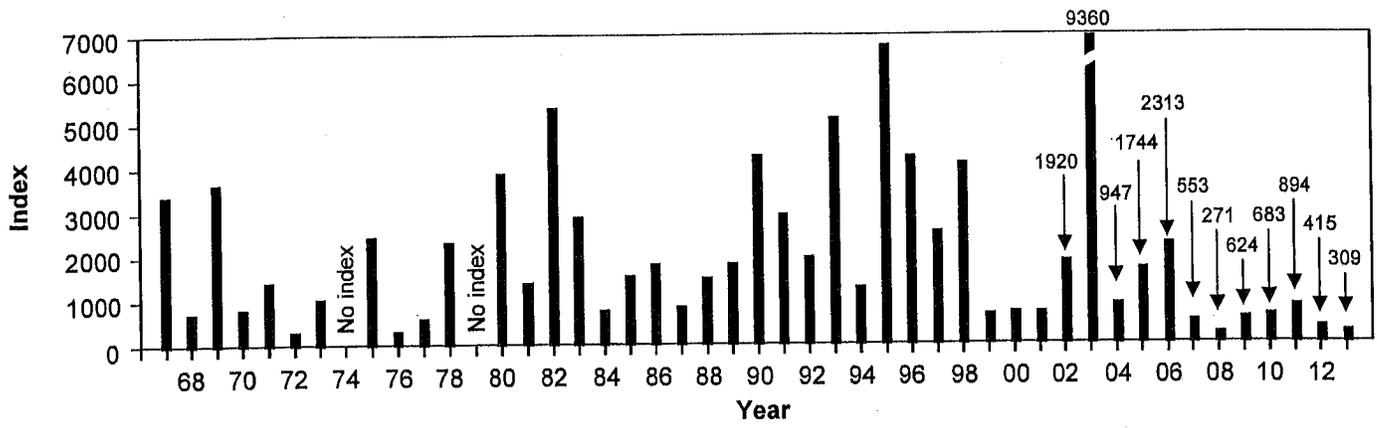


Figure 6. American Shad FMWT annual abundance indices, 1967-2013.